
Mr. Archdeacon *CLAGETT*'s
S E R M O N

Before the

QUEEN,

DECEMBER 31. 1704.



Christian Simplicity.

A
SERMON
Preach'd before the
QUEEN

A T
St. James's Chappel,
On SUNDAY December 31. 1704.

By NICHOLAS CLAGETT, A. M.
Archdeacon of Sudbury.

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SERMON

Preached before the

QUEEN



St James's Chapel,

On Sunday, December 17, 1704.

By NICHOLAS CLOUTIER, A.M.
Archdeacon of Salisbury.

Printed by W. B. for J. B. at the Sign of the Anchor.

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2 CORINTH. I. 12.

For our rejoycing is this, The testimony of our Conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the Grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.

THE Blessed Apostle, in the beginning of this Second Epistle to the *Corinthians*, acquaints them with the Trials he still went through in the course of his Ministry; that much Trouble came upon him in *Asia*; that he was pressed there out of measure, above strength, insomuch that he despaired even of life, and had the sentence of death in himself: But yet that he found great Satisfaction and Consolation amidst all his Afflictions, cheerfully trusting in God for deliverance; and not doubting the benefit of their Prayers for him, so long as he could say thus much of himself with Truth, *Our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.*

Two Things are to be Discoursed on from this Text.

- I. The Nature of *Christian Simplicity*, and of *fleshly Wisdom*.
- II. The Comfort and Happiness that results from the former in good Men, whose Consciences do bear them witness of it. *Our rejoicing, saith the Apostle, is this.*

I. Then, I shall treat of the Simplicity of a Christian, and of the Wisdom of this World, which here stand opposed to one another. And

First, Of Christian Simplicity, shewing what that is: The word *ἀπλότης*, *simplicity* here, is explained by its being joined with *εὐκρίνεια*, *sincerity*: By *simplicity* sometimes is meant an Imperfection of the Understanding, sometimes a Perfection of the Will: We find it in the former sense, *Prov. 1. 22.* where Wisdom expostulates with the Unwise in this manner, *How long ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity, and fools hate knowledge?* For there *simplicity* is opposed to *knowledge*. And by the *simple*, in the more common acceptation of the Word, we mean the unwary, short-sighted, and foolish; but elsewhere by Simplicity is meant, not want of Understanding or Wit, but Moral Virtue and a Rectitude of the Will and Affections; as in the Text, where it is the same with *godly sincerity*, and is opposed, not to true Wisdom, but to the Wisdom of the Flesh, and of the World. It is the Virtue of Singleness, the *single eye* our Saviour speaks of, *Matth. 6. 22.* which makes the *whole body full of light*, that is, Purity of Intention guiding us, which graces all our good Actions in the sight of God, and gives them their true worth and Value, and the *single heart*, which is required in

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Servants, and was commended in the first Christians: And so Christian Sincerity is called here *simplicity*, in opposition to that duplicity of Mind, and Heart, and Tongue, which the Scripture so much condemns. If a Man be *διπλοκαρδης*, *double-minded*, without any fixed Principles and Rules, and so is *unstable in all his ways*, that we know not where to have him; If he hath a *double-heart*, *1 Chron. 12. 33.* an heart and an heart, as in the Hebrew there, one in Shew and Pretence, the other in Reality; If he *speaks with a double-heart*, with dark Expressions, crafty Ambiguities, Equivocations, and mental Reservations, or with Words of Dissimulation and Flattery; If he be *double-tongued*, says and unsays, plays fast and loose, speaking one thing to a Man's Face, another behind his back, one thing in this Company, the contrary in that, as he can best please the different Humours of them he happens amongst; and if he be double in his Dealings, without openness and plainness, he is a Stranger to the *Simplicity* in the Text.

Col. 3. 22.

Acts 2. 46.

James 1. 8.

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Psal. 12. 2.

1 Tim. 3. 8.

But to be more particular and full in the Explication of this Virtue; there are Five Things which we are to take for certain Marks and Rules of it; viz. *Veracity in our Speech. Honesty in our actions. Purity in our Intentions. Uniformity of Righteousness in our whole Conversation. And Constancy in that way of Universal Righteousness to the end.*

1. *Veracity in Speech and Communication.* A Man of true Simplicity abhors Lying and Falshood; nor can he bear the Conscience of such Guilt in himself All his Testimonies of Persons, and Accounts of Things, may be safely relyed on. His Heart and his Tongue go together, and the latter is the true Expression of the former; and the strict Truth he speaks, answers the end of

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Discourse and Conversation, which is to know the real Truth of one another ; and he never *deceives the hearts of the simple by good words and fair speeches*. For he doth not only avoid and abominate an absolute Lye, but carefully declines other Arts of deceiving in Talk ; he doth not intermix with Truth, or add to it more than he knows to be true : He hates to mislead a Man into wrong apprehensions of Things by fallacious Representations, as by disguising what should be clearly discovered and known, or palliating what he ought to expose and censure, or aggravating any matter beyond the reality of the case ; neither doth he make use of Expressions of double and doubtful Meaning, to beguile and delude his Neighbour, nor sooth and dissemble to impose upon him, but truly and plainly delivers his Mind without any *guile*, according to the *Psalmist's* Character of an Upright Man ; That he *speaketh the truth in, or from his heart*. One main branch of Christian Simplicity, is the Integrity of the Tongue.

Psalm. 15.
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2. Another is, *Honesty in our Actions*. He that is endued with the Virtue in the Text, is so far from cheating and over-reaching his Neighbour, that he hates all Trick and Knavery with his Soul ; he *walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly*, but detests Couzenage and Fraud, and all the ways of Unrighteousness ; nay, one great part of his Christian Care, is, That he be Innocent and Harmless in what he does, and wrong no Man, whatever may be gotten by Dishonesty : And if by any thing he has done, Harm happens to another beyond what he meant, he is not backward to make good the Damage ; he is certainly not worse than he is taken to be, and proves ever to all Men such a one, as in reason they may expect to find him. In a word, he strictly observes Justice

stice in his Dealings, according to the Rule of doing as we would be done by.

3. The Simplicity of a Christian, is *Rectitude and Purity of Intention*; that is, as in the general course of his Life, he doth all to the glory of God, so in all his particular good Actions his Intention is right and pure. Thus says the Apostle, *He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity*; that is, with the right end and meaning, for Charity, for the Love of God and his Neighbour, not for Vain-glory. But if a Man pretends Kindness and Charity to another in a matter wherein the end he propounds is to serve himself; If he serves with a seeming Zeal for publick good, when all the while there is a Self-interest to be served, or some private Passion to be gratified, that is most in his thoughts; If he doth what is beneficial, and popular, and great indeed, but not for God's Glory, and for the sake of doing Good, so much as for the Vanity of Applause, and to have glory of men; If he be an Hypocrite, Religious in appearance, for base ends, and makes long prayers to devour widows houses; in these Cases his Intention is depraved, or at least adulterated and polluted with Mixture, and there is no simplicity in such a Man. Rom. 12. 8.

4. *Uniformity of Life and Practice* is Essential to true Christian Simplicity. The Apostle in the Text doth not say, his Conscience testified of him, That in simplicity and godly sincerity he had spoken and done some things well, and discharged some parts of his Duty, and was Pious and Righteous now and then; but that herein he had his conversation in the world; that is, That this was a Virtue which governed him throughout, regulating all his Thoughts, Words, and Actions, and Affections, alike at all times, and influencing his whole Converse.

tion. In his Exhortation to Servants, Colloſſ. 3. 22. he would have them *obey their masters according to the flesh, not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God*; for then doubtless they would do just as good Service when their Master's Eye was off them, as when it was over them; otherwise not: For as St. James says, *A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways*. A Man of Simplicity is not so; he is not one thing to a Friend, by whom he hath a Turn to serve, and another thing when it is served; he is not one thing at Church, another thing out of it; one thing in the eye of the World, another thing before God, when the World sees him not; he is not Godly in open pretence and profession with the Godly, and a Secret Villain; nor is he a Saint in appearance at one time, and a Devil at another; but his Life and Conversation is all of a piece, and the parts of it exactly agree together; and so to him belongs not the Wo denounced by the Son of Ecclus. 2. *Sirach against the sinner that goeth two ways*. And therefore

5. The Simplicity of a Christian implies *Constancy and Perseverance in such an uniform Life, and in the way of all Virtue to the end*: He doth not profess the Truth, and adhere to her while she makes for his Temporal Interest, and then forsake her, when against it; he is Impartial in the love of Truth and his Duty, and sticks firmly to both with equal Stedfastness, whether they have the Favour and Countenance, or the Opposition of the World: Thus the Apostle's comfortable Testimony of himself, which we have in the Text, he gave at a time when he was under great Perils and Troubles for the Gospel; which plainly shewed, that yet he *fainted not*, was not discouraged or shaken at all, but was the same

same Man still, and went on undauntedly in the work of the Ministry; says he, our Conscience witnesseth, That in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our conversation in the world; and no doubt he was persuaded, that so he should have it to the end, and that nothing could separate him from the love of Christ.

Rom. 8.

It may be added, That an impartial regard to Truth and Right in Causes depending between Men and Men, belongs also to the Nature of Simplicity; for that Virtue admits of no Mixture of by-respects and ends to influence in such Proceedings, and to obstruct Justice in its course: It hath no respect of Persons in judgment, and allows of no Party-Causes, as we call 'em, in which, whatever is pretended, Fairness and Equity is not minded, but the Service of a Party. If therefore in Judicial Debates a Man would take on the right-side, here, if he be Upright, his integrity will guide him, as the Wise Man speaks; whereas Partiality sets a Man's Cause in a false Light, and if the single-eye be wanting, no wonder if Prejudice and Corruption blind the insincere, that they see not as they ought; so that even in that Sense, what Daniel says is true, None of the wicked shall understand, but the wise; that is, the Good and Honest, as opposed to the Wicked, shall understand.

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Prov. 11.

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Dan. 12.

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This is Christian Simplicity at large, which to denote the excellency of it, is here called *ἐλάττωσις Θεῶν*, the Sincerity of God, a Being of the most Perfect Simplicity, and therefore it is an Image and Resemblance of the Absolute Truth and Purity of God, who is void of all Deceit and Falshood.

And because this is a great and most Divine Attainment, it is not mentioned in the Text without the special Divine Operation, to which it is Attributed: *In simplici-*

and godly sincerity, by the Grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world. For the Divine Spirit dwells in upright and honest Minds; as on the other hand, Fraud, and Craft, and Villany, are owing in a great measure to the Motion and Instigation of the old accursed Deceiver, the father of lies, that wicked Spirit which worketh in the children of disobedience.

There is indeed another Notion of Christian Simplicity, we find in the Eleventh Chapter of this Epistle, and at the Third Verse, where the Apostle means by it the unmixedness of Gospel Doctrine and Worship with any false Doctrine or Worship whatsoever; for the Purity of the Gospel in both these Respects is called in that place, *the simplicity that is in Christ*, from which he feared least the *Corinthians should be corrupted*. But because this doth not so closely belong to the Subject I am upon, I shall say the less of it: And

2. Shall proceed to discourse of the *Fleshly Wisdom* to which *Simplicity* is here opposed, which therefore must be the Wisdom that regards not Honesty and Sincerity at all, but only Fleshly and Worldly Ends. There is an allowable Wisdom for the World, which is not properly the Wisdom of it; and there is a Prudence and Policy in things appertaining to this Life, and in the Concerns of our Pilgrimage here, which is not excluded by Christian Simplicity, but is very well consistent with it: This Wisdom our Saviour approved and recommended to his Disciples, when he bad them, *Be wise as Serpents and harmless as Doves*. If we seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and take care to secure the main Chance, *the one thing needful*, we may be as wise as we please for the addition of other things to us. And
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of this Wisdom within the bounds of our Duty, the Apostle himself was an Example in his practice, who professed the strictest Simplicity ; for when he was set before a Council of the Jews as a Prisoner, and *perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees*, to divert them from their purpose against him, he took advantage of the Court's consisting of two such differing Parties ; and that the *Pharisees* might favour him, he *cry'd out in the Council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee ; of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question ;* believing that from such a Profession of himself, a Dissention would arise in the Council, and they would take occasion to spend the time in Disputes among themselves, and let him alone at that meeting ; and so it proved : which was an Act of honest Policy, not of the carnal Wisdom in the Text. Acts 23.

So again, though his *speech and preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power*, that the Faith of his Converts should *not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God ;* 1 Cor. 2. yet when Eloquence and Ornament of Speech was proper and requisite to vindicate himself, and to clear and illustrate his own Innocence, then he made use of that Wisdom ; for when he was brought before *Felix* the Governor, and Accused, in his Defence he equal'd, if not out-did *Tertullus* the Orator, who pleaded against him. Acts 24. Neither could the Apostle be supposed to rejoyce, that he *had not his conversation in the world* with human Prudence, or that he had failed of that Discretion, which in the course of his Life might have saved him from divers Inconveniencies and Evils ; because the sense and remembrance of having miscarried in our Affairs at any time through Over-sight and Imprudence, is

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no matter of Joy, but of Regret and Trouble rather ; though indeed nothing of that Nature ought to trouble a Man a quarter so much, as the Conscience of Sin : Wherefore it is clear, that by the fleshly and worldly Wisdom, which the Apostle here opposes to Simplicity, is to be understood, their Wisdom for their end, who *mind earthly things*, and serve the Flesh and their Interests in this World, not regarding Conscience and the Faith of another World.

And of these Wise of this World there are three several sorts : Some of them will be under the restraints of Religion so far as they think is in any respect requisite for their Worldly Welfare : Others will take more Liberty in serving their Worldly Designs, only still with a care to be safe from the Laws of Men, and the Punishments they Inflict : Others have their full swing, and allow themselves the utmost latitude of Expedients for their Ends, without any check from Human Laws at all. The

First sort are careful to practice all that Virtue and Religion in the sight of Men, which any way conduces to a secular Happiness, but go no farther ; and so all the good that appears in them is to be resolved at last no otherwise than into Worldly Policy. For there is Virtue *Philosophical*, and Virtue *Political*. The former is the Virtue of a Man, who Measures Good and Evil, not by the convenience of Sense and this present Life, but by the Eternal Rules of Reason, by what is Moral or Immoral, Right or Wrong, Just or Unjust, in its own Nature. The latter, Political Virtue, is so much as is requisite for the acquiring and securing the Goods of Fortune, and for a peaceable, and reputable, and sociable Life between Man and Man : For Rules and Bounds are

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prescribed by the Wisdom of this World, as well as by Religion and Conscience. As for that Man that lays the Rein upon the neck of his Lusts and Passions, and suffers himself to be carried to any kind of Extravagancy by them, he pulls Misery upon himself, and shortens his Days, and is all the while Ridiculous, and reproached for a Fool. And therefore there is less need of urging Men with Reasons drawn from Religion to abstain from the worst Things, to forbear the lewdest Debaucheries, the most manifest Injustice, and open Violence. There is then such Virtue as seems enough to secure Men a quiet and prosperous Life in the World, to render them grateful to their Friends and Acquaintance, and to give them a fair Reputation; notwithstanding which, they may labour under foul Defects and Impurities, and be guilty of divers Sins, which render them Evil in the Sight of God. For *fleshy Wisdom* will carry Men no farther than the service of its own end: As for instance, it will not oblige them to Devout and Earnest Prayer in the Closet, as well as bring them to Church; nor dispose them to give secretly and freely to the Poor, from whom no Reward can be expected in this Life; nor secure them from Uncleanneſs and Debauchery, when they are encouraged to it by Safety and Secrecy; nor to be sure will it enable them to take up the Cross of Christ, and to undergo Persecution, and to leave all their worldly Interest, when their Duty to God, and the Care of their Souls make it needful. But thus far it will go with some Men, it will teach them to avoid Scandalous Vice, and to be Civilly Virtuous: If they make no Conscience of Falshood and Fraud, but will Lye and Cheat for their Worldly Advantage, it will make them careful not to tell a Lye, when there is dan-

danger of being trapp'd, and not to Cozen when the Knavery is like to be discovered. Though they be bad in themselves, they are not willing to appear to others what they are, but would pass for Just Men, having their whole Conversation only from this Principle. A

Second sort of the Men of this World, whose Conversation and Dealings are according to *fleshly Wisdom*, are less nice in their Methods for their ends, leaving themselves more at Liberty in the Prosecution of them; whose great Rule it is in their way of Craft and Iniquity, to keep out of the reach of the Law, and in comparison they matter little other Inconveniences of Vice. I shall instance particularly in the Shame that belongs to it, which some bad Men can dispense with, in an Evil way: Of this kind is the Occasional Communicant, who repairs to the Sacred Table when an Office requires him to be there, and never else; for most plain it is, that what he dreads, is the penalty of Neglect to be qualified, not the Scandal of communicating only upon such Occasion. And so there are ill Men, who while they take heed not to be Obnoxious to Human Justice, and to be Exposed and Chastised in Courts for Dishonesty, will be content to bear some of the Disgrace of it for the sake of the Unrighteous Profit it brings them. It is true, the Men of this sort generally would seem Honest in their ways as well as the other; but when these meet with a great Temptation to Injustice, they close with it, whoever may chance to see into the Cheat, in case there be no danger of a Legal Discovery; they are resolved to live by their Wits, though they know their Tricking cannot always escape Observation and Censure. Money and Gain is more to them than Esteem,

Esteem ; and they prefer the Profits of Deceit without the good Opinion of their Neighbours, before a good Name with an empty Purse. And when some of them have raised themselves considerably in the World, and advanced their Fortunes by a known Success in Fraud, it shall seldom trouble them much to think that few will trust them, or speak well of them : Those Cheats, for instance, that get Wealth by pretending Poverty, I mean, who draw their Creditors into Compositions, while they are well able to pay all, and put them by the means past recovering their full dues, are little concerned at the shameful discoveries of their Sufficiency afterwards, when the Villany comes out. Here's then the difference between such Wise of the World, and those of the First sort: They in their secular Life have the advantage of this Wisdom, that they carefully practise so much of Religion, as is necessary to save them from the temporal Mischiefs of an Irreligious Course, from Reproach in particular; and therefore will put on an appearance of Righteousness: But then these latter may count themselves Wiser than the former in this respect; that standing less upon Credit and a clear Reputation, which are not always necessary for the Gains of this World, they are less limited and restrained within Rules in their Measures for the World, have a larger scope for Action, and can lay hold of more Opportunities of Profit, as they offer themselves; upon which account they seem to be in a better way for the gaining their Ends than the other ; provided always that in all their Subtleties and deceitful Methods of *Evil Report*, due care be taken about this one thing, Not to come within danger of the Law. There are a

Third sort, who have the utmost Latitude in this way

of *fleshy Wisdom*, without check or controul, and are barr'd from no Expedients for their purpose, even by any secular Law: And by such I can mean only those Lords of this World, Absolute in Power, and Arbitrary in their Government where they Rule, that have their Conversation with this Wisdom. For to see how much to blame some of that Rank are apt to be in this particular, might make an Observer too ready* to think, that Simplicity was not Calculated for Sovereignty, or intended to be a Throne-Virtue; that the great Affairs of Worldly State are in no wise to be managed within Christian Rules; and that the Kingdoms of the Mighty here are to be established, and their Dominions to be enlarged, not in *Righteousness*, but by Dissimulation, Perfidiousness, Treary-Breaking, and such ill Arts of Falshood and Deceit, as would be foul Blemishes and Scandals in inferior private Persons.

Jer. 4. 22.

Rom. 16.

19.

Now in opposition to all this worldly Craft, whether of close Hypocrisy, or more bare-faced Dishonesty, or tyrannical Ambition, the Apostle would have us of the contrary Christian Spirit; viz. That whereas the Prophet *Jeremiah* speaks of some that were *wise to do evil, but to do good had no knowledge*; we on the contrary would be *wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil*. A Precept something of the same nature with that he gave to the *Corinthians* in his former Epistle; *In malice be ye children, in understanding be men*. Our Saviour exhorts his Disciples to be *as harmless as doves*, that is, like to them, that have neither Power nor Disposition to do hurt. And it is the Apostle's Precept, that we should be *simple concerning evil*; that is, be as those who want Wit to do it: Not that those who are Wise for God's Glory, and in the promotion

tion of good Ends in the World, can be less skilful for doing Evil than others are, could they allow themselves to do it: Nay, he that is Wise within the limits of Innocence and Integrity, being confined to few Expedients, shews a great deal more Wit and Skill than a Man of Latitude, that acts in a very large Sphere, and hardly sticks at any thing in the pursuit of his End. In the Precept to be *simple concerning evil*, where by the word *ἀπλῶς*, is to be understood, not *single* but *unskilful*; the Apostle's meaning is, That we ought to be so harmless in our Behaviour to all Men, so void of all Trick and Cozenage, as if we knew no more how to contrive any Harm or do Mischief, than Fools or Children.

But alas! How little of the Simplicity in the Text is to be found amongst Men? To have one's Conversation in the World, without the carnal and corrupt Policies of it, is a more rare and singular Excellence: But yet I must say withal, that there are those who are true Christians in Simplicity, according to the Apostle's Character of himself; which I cannot forbear noting, because of one unreasonable and unjust Pretence that is sometimes made use of by the Libertines of the World, to justify, or at least to excuse their own Licentiousness; and that is, That whatever they pretend, who preach the Duties of Religion in the utmost extent, and those that seem to hearken to them, and to practice accordingly, in Truth they are no better than Hypocrites, and a cunning sort of People that make a Trade of seeming better than other Men: They are for ends of their own, it is said, in their open Conversation; and there they appear more Modest and Refined, but in their Hearts and Retirements, and at convenient times and places,

Ch. 3. v.
17, 20.

they are indeed as bad as other folks, and live by the same Principles more closely and politickly. Now they that talk at this rate, are such who would have all men thought to be as bad as themselves: But why should any in this manner reproach the Elect of God, and accuse their *good Conversation in Christ*? Why should it be thought strange, that amongst those who believe the Doctrines of Christianity, some should be found that live according to their Belief, and are at least as good as they seem to be? The Apostle was conscious of his own Integrity, as in the Text; nay, says he, *we have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness*; though nevertheless the *Corinthians* might be ready to suspect Craft and Guile in him without cause: *Chap. 12. v. 16.* And he thus exhorts the *Philippians*, *Brethren, be ye followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example; for our Conversation is in heaven*: So that others had their Conversation without fleshly Wisdom, as well as he. And, God be thanked, there are in a loose Age Examples of Pious Persons, who may convince all indifferent Observers, as much as a thing of this Nature can be done, that they *eschew evil and do good*, out of Conscience, and a Sense of their Duty, and the hope of Eternal Life.

One might rather justly marvel, that there is no more Christian Simplicity and Sincerity in the World, considering that mighty Reason for it which is intimated in the Text, and elsewhere expressly mentioned by the Apostle; *viz.* That we are all continually in God's Sight, to whose Eyes all Things are naked and open, and who is *of purer eyes than to behold iniquity*. The *sincerity of God*, as it is a likeness to God, approved by him, so it is wrought in us by a due Sense of him. For
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when the Apostle recommended himself as an Example of Sincerity, we find he took notice of the Presence and All-seeing Eye of God, as the great Motive to this Virtue. It was his way to *set the Lord always before him*, and then he walked before God with a Perfect Heart; Says he, in the 17th Verse of the next Chapter, *As of Sincerity, as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ: And again, By manifestation of the truth we commend our selves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.* And they were terrible Words of St. Peter to Simon the Sorcerer, who thought to have bought with Money the Power of Conferring the Holy Ghost; *thy heart is not right in the sight of God.* I say, it is a powerful Argument to persuade us to be Christians in Simplicity, that we are always under the Eye, and lie open to the View of the Omniscient Searcher of Hearts, who *abhors the deceitful man.* And what if we could be sometimes out of his Sight? suppose we might hide as much from him, as we may and often do from the World? in that case it would stand us in hand vastly more to take care that we keep our Insincerities from God's Observation and Knowledge, than to hide them from Men; because this World, in Comparison, is nothing to us, who in a short time must leave it, and have no more to do with it: Whereas with God we have an everlasting Concern; He is to make us happy or miserable for ever. For a Man then to be easy so long as the World sees not his Naughtiness, while God sees all, and nothing can be hid from him whose Censure he should dread most of all; this looks, in truth, as if he had no Belief of a God at all, and there was little difference between a Knave and an Atheist: And, therefore, no wonder that these kind of Exhortations

Ch. 4. v. 2.

Acts 8. 21.

Psal. 5. 6.

tations and Instructions are given in Scripture to Professors of Religion ; *Servants obey your Masters according to the flesh ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God. Lay aside all guile and hypocrisies ; purifie your hearts ye double-minded. The wisdom that is from above, is without partiality, and without hypocrisie.*

1 Pet. 2. 1.

Jam. 4. 8.
3. 17.

Ch. 21.
v. 14.

I am very sensible that it is no easy matter to persuade some Men to the Virtue in the Text, which is the Subject of this Discourse ; that is, to downright *Honesty* : It must cramp 'em not a little, as they will think, in their Worldly Projects and Measures, and must make a very great Change in their Methods of Business, tie them up to strict Rules, allow them but scanty Expedients, spoil some of their Designs, and sometimes cause them to refuse Offers of Advantage ; and therefore, if *Simplicity* and godly *Sincerity* be required by Religion, *they say unto God, with the wicked in Job, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.* When God Almighty charg'd *Balaam* by no means to curse the Children of *Israel* at *Balak's* importunity, truly he did not curse them, because he dared not do that, but yet he was a Wretch ; his heart was not with God, but went after his Covetousness, and the *Wages of Unrighteousness*, as appeared afterwards by his wicked Counsel to *Balak*, how to get advantage against the *Israelites*, to oblige him that way : So that we see immediate Revelation, and the being a Prophet, did not make that Man honest. Likewise, when the Covetous *Pharisees* perceived that our Saviour's Doctrine went cross to their worldly Minds and Ends, though it was Doctrine authorized and confirmed by Miracles, yet they were so far from being

being persuaded, that they derided the Divine Teacher, because they were covetous : So I may well expect, that with the worldly Wise, and the Scornful Sons of Craft and Deceit, a Discourse of this kind will be received no better ; and that the Argument of it will be turned by them into Matter for Jest ; as if either there was no such thing as Real Simplicity, or it were to be attributed, where it is, to a Natural Defect that deserves Contempt, and were the Complexion only of slow and heavy Minds.

Luk. 16.
14.

However, I shall not be discouraged from trying what may be done, by enforcing that Lively Motive to Christian Simplicity, from the Apostle's Example, and Experience of the Virtue ; Which is the Second Thing remaining to be handled from the Words, to wit,

II. The great Comfort and Joy it affords to good Men, whose Consciences do witness it of them. And truly, all the Advantages that can be made in this World by fleshly Wisdom, are nothing comparable to the Pleasure of Simplicity and Honesty, and to the Joy that ariseth from the Conscience of such Virtue. *The folly of fools is deceit*, says the Wise Man ; where, by *fools*, he must mean the wise according to the Wisdom of the Flesh ; because there is need of Art and Cunning to manage Deceit ; and such *wise* he might well call *fools*, and their Deceit *folly*, inasmuch as by the Course they take, they quit the proper Pleasure that belongs to Reasonable Natures. Let then the Men of Depth and Cunning, that are sharp and shrewd in all the Points of fleshly Wisdom, glory in themselves ; let them be admired and celebrated by others, and pass for the notable People of their time ; Give me *the good*

Prov. 14.
8.

Acts 24.
16.

good and honest heart our Saviour commended, the conscience void of offence towards God, and towards man, which our Apostle exercised himself to have always; and the plain Man's Simplicity, before all such Wisdom; That rather should be a Christian's Wish. And if by any deceitful Dealing a man hath utterly deprived himself of the Comfort in the Text, what can compensate for the want of it? Nay, *what shall it profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose himself in this Sense; that is, the Peace and Satisfaction of his own Mind, which is more worth than the World.* As I think will appear, when I have represented the Blessedness of that Joy, which results from a Conscience of Sincerity, by these good Effects and Consequences of it: viz.

It sets a man above the Opinion of the World.

It is a certain support to a man under all the Adversity that befalls him in the World.

It gives him a comfortable Prospect and good Assurance when he is leaving the World.

Acts 23.1.

1. *It raises us above the Opinion of the Men of this World.* Of this the Apostle was an eminent Instance, when he stood before a Jewish Council; instead of looking with Concern and Uneasiness, he earnestly beheld the Council, and said, *Men and brethren, I have lived in all good Conscience before God untill this day; As being above their Censure, and One that could find no Reason to be Dismayed at their, or any other Men's Proceedings against him.* And he says thus to the Corinthians in the 4th Chapter of his former Epistle, v. 3. *With me it is a very small thing, that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment.* No doubt all the while, that he rejoiced in the

the Testimony of his Conscience, he was careful according to his own Precept to *provide things honest in the sight of all men*, as well as in the Sight of God. And he was not wanting to do all that was requisite for his maintaining a fair Reputation amongst Men; neither would he proudly disdain any Man's Censure and Admonition, which there was just occasion for. But while he was sure he was approved by God and his own Conscience, and thereupon had the Joy in the Text, it was not material to him what Men thought of him: He neither covered the Praises, nor valued the Reproaches of the World. And to say the Truth, Vain-glory, and worldly Ambition, where they are, do discover a great want of that Blessed Thing, which was matter of Rejoycing to the Apostle. When Men look out so eagerly for Satisfaction from Abroad, it is a sign none are to be had at home. Whereas it is an excellent Saying of the Wise Man, *A good man shall be satisfied from himself*. And that secret Satisfaction in one's own Breast is vastly beyond all the glory of Flattery, Applause, and worldly Renown; and the Man that is Blessed with it, Embraces and Enjoys himself, not depending at all upon the Opinion of Men. Rom. 12. 17. Prov. 14. 14.

2. The Satisfaction and Joy that flows from a Sense of Simplicity and godly Sincerity, *is an excellent relief and support in time of tribulation*. This the Apostle happily experienced; this heavenly Consolation of Mind he declared in a time of Trouble, and it was the Affliction he endured, that occasioned him to express himself so as he did in the Text. He had been pressed out of measure, even to despair of life, yet still he was confident in God, and in the Prayers of good Men for him, be-

D.

cause

cause he could say, *Our rejoycing* is this Testimony of our Conscience, that we have lived *in all godliness and honesty*. Whereas a Knave, whose Conversation in the World hath been only according to fleshly Wisdom, is utterly destitute of all Comfort and Support when that Wisdom fails him, and can no farther help him, and Evil nevertheless overtakes him, especially if he be signally seized with the Vengeance of God, who sometimes *taketh the wise in their own craftiness*. Nay, I doubt not to say, that better it is to miscarry in our secular Affairs, by lack of Human Prudence and the Innocent Wisdom, than to prosper by the Fleshly Wisdom. Better a great deal is the Honest Man, who (suppose) is betrayed into worldly Evils through failure of Discretion and Sagacity, than the cunning fraudulent Dealer, who succeeds in the World, and thrives and flourishes in his way never so much : The condition of the former is more to be chosen, and admits of more Comfort, than that of the latter.

3. The sincere Christian is still more transported with Joy in the sense of his Integrity, when he is *about to leave the world*; having this Testimony from his Conscience, that in his Conversation here he did not make this World his End, nor consequently the Wisdom and Policies of it his Means to his End; but that he all along lived by a far more *blessed hope*, and governed himself by the Rules and Laws of an infinitely better Place, to which he is going. And therefore, whereas we see in the Text, that the Apostle gave out what an Heavenly Joy he felt in a time of Affliction, no wonder if we find that he could not forbear expressing greater Degrees of that Joy, when he was *ready to be offered*, and *the time of his*

his departure was at hand ; for he says then of himself, *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of Righteousness.* ^{2 Tim. 4. 7, 8.}

Thus happy to the last was that holy Man, in the Joy which he expressed in the Text.

And now that following so excellent an Example, we may also partake of the same Blessedness, we are to note Two Things in such Testimony of himself, which are proper to be remarked for our Instruction: The first is,

1. That his great Joy flowed from the Testimony of his Conscience, not as witnessing of him some particular instances of commendable Virtue, so much as what he had been in the general and constant course of his Life. In shewing the nature of true Christian Simplicity, I have noted, that this Virtue, where it is, secures all other Virtue, and is ever a Principle of universal Righteousness. Says the Apostle, *our rejoicing, καυχόμενοι*, our Boast, our Glory, our Triumph is this, *That we have had our CONVERSATION in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom.* Some Satisfaction indeed a Man finds in the reflection, when he thinks that he hath been careful to avoid such or such Sins, and that now and then he hath done some things well. But if we have truly a sense of the Virtue in the Text, and know full well of our selves, that a Spirit of Honesty and Integrity runs through our whole Conversation; this is the perfection of a good Conscience in this state, which gains confidence towards God; especially if all the while, in the

2. Place, God hath called us to much Business in the World, and of more Difficulty, Consequence, and Importance, than is common among Men; and the Divine Providence hath allotted us a special Service in our Generation; for that was the Apostle's Case. It added not a little to his Joy in himself, that none of all the Difficulties, and Tryals, and Temptations he had undergone in his Travels about the World to do the work of an Apostle, ever violated his Integrity; but still he came off *more than a Conqueror*, and served God *with his spirit in the Gospel of his Son*. For the greater Tryals of Sincerity a Man meets withal in his particular Profession of Life, and the oftner that is Proved, the more Pleasure he reaps from the Conscience of it. There is, no doubt, Comfort to Men of private Callings, in a Conscience that testifies Honesty; but in such a Conscience they rejoyce more, who are in a life of publick Business and Management, which ministers more than ordinary Temptations to corrupt them.

And therefore they that are in great Trusts, and Offices, and Employments for the common Good, they that are in high and honourable Posts and Stations, and they that sway the Sceptre, have still a more Comfortable Experience of a steady and constant Virtue, if their Integrity is never shaken, their Simplicity not corrupted, but they are **A L W A Y S T H E S A M E.**

I cannot close this Discourse better than with one Inference from the latter part of it, which is this; That if there be those joyous Feelings of Sincerity on this side Heaven, then how blisful and ravishing will be the Sense of that excellent Thing when we are arrived thither?

ther ? How Glorious the Rewards of it in another World ? Here sometimes Virtue is under a Cloud, and it is often obscured by Calumny and Reproach, or at least Over-look'd; and yet notwithstanding, good Men have their secret Rejoycings, such as the Apostle found; how compleat and perfect then will be the Divine Satisfactions of pious Minds, when Virtue can bear an Eclipse no longer, but the *light of the just* shall be grown to a *perfect day*, and the *righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father !*

Wherefore, when the great Day of Revelation and Discovery comes, that will shew what all Men are, and we shall *turn and discern between the righteous and the wicked*; when God shall *bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts*; and that shall be verified which our Saviour says, *Nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest, nor any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.* Luk. 8.17. When all *mysteries of iniquity*, all Depths of Satan and his Agents shall be brought forth and exposed on the Stage; when Tricks and Frauds, and Dissimulations, and Hypocrisies, shall be openly detected and censured, and *deceitful workers* who have been guilty of such Things shall receive to themselves that *recompence of their error which is meet*; when the Wise of this World that have not been *wise unto salvation*, shall be rejected for Fools, and cast out to *shame and everlasting contempt*, and all the Pageantry and Gayeties of this World being over and done withal, and all Masks and Disguises being pulled off, nothing will pass but Integrity and Uprightness; when every Man that hath faithfully served God in this Life, shall be called to *enter into*
his

his master's joy with the Commendation of a good and faithful servant; and every praise-worthy Man shall have praise of God: Then, then begins the most Triumphant Gladness of Sincere Good Men, and they rejoyce with joy unspeakable, and full of Glory.

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